

LORD TIMOTHY DEXTER;

OR,

THE GREATEST MAN IN THE EAST.

A Comedy in Five Acts.

BY

HENRY AMES BLOOD.

Entered, according to Act of Congress, in the year 1874, by HENRY AMES BLOOD, in
the Office of the Librarian of Congress, at Washington.

All rights reserved.

LORD TIMOTHY DEXTER ;

OR,

THE GREATEST MAN IN THE EAST.

A Comedy in Five Acts.

BY
HENRY AMES BLOOD.

3
2
2
2
2
2
2
2
2
2

Entered, according to Act of Congress, in the year 1874, by HENRY AMES BLOOD, in
the Office of the Librarian of Congress, at Washington.

All rights reserved.

copy 2

PS 1103
B85 L6
1874
copy 2

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

{ LORD TIMOTHY DEXTER, or,
{ "THE GREATEST MAN IN THE EAST."
PLUMISON PEACHES.
DUKE DE GRANDAM.
BACHELDER.
CHAMPNEY.
BILLINGS.
BABSON.
LADY DEXTER.
TIMOLINE.
PATTY.
THREE WOMEN.
LUCY LANCASTER.



Gift.
W. L. Shoemaker
1 8 '06

LORD TIMOTHY DEXTER.

ACT I.

SCENE I.

Newburyport, Massachusetts. A sumptuous apartment, the sides of which are ornamented with chronometers of various shapes and sizes. Present, Lord Dexter, elegantly dressed in the Continental style, and seated in a superb easy-chair, à la grand seigneur, fanning himself; and Champney, an artisan, who is making the rounds of the room, examining the clocks.

DEX. How do they behave, my good Champney?

CH. Quite as well as could be expected. But this one [*pointing*] seems to have gained more rapidly this week than last.

DEX. (*rising and advancing.*) Ah! You mean Julius Cæsar? There can't much be expected of Julius. Holloa, there, Julius! [*addressing himself to the clock.*] Do you know, Mr. Julius, I shall sell you under the hammer, if you don't behave yourself?

CH. My Lord, I think I can bring Julius all right; but why do you call this particular clock Julius Cæsar?

DEX. Because he gits ahead of me, same as Julius Cæsar got ahead of the rest of the world. That 's a good reason, I hope. [*Walks about restlessly.*]

CH. (*laughing.*) A very good reason, indeed. But what is the name of this one? [*Points to another.*]

DEX. I call him "The Fourth of July." He's so devilish independent I can't do anything with him. This one [*pointing to a third*] is Robespierre, an almighty contrary feller. This one is Demosthenes, he talks so loud. This one is old Pack-horse, the stiddest in the whole

crowd. This young feller don't strike at all, and I call him Coward. They 've all got their names, Champney, and let 'em change 'em if they dare. By the way, Champney, time 's a curus thing, a'n't it? The curusest thing I know, is time. What do you think it is, Champney?

CH. That 's a hard question, my lord.

DEX. I thought I should stump you. But I guess what it is. There 's Julius Cæsar now, he shows you when it 's goin' to rain. How could he do that unless time 's in the air, Champney? How about that?

CH. I should n't be surprised.

DEX. Then, old Pack-horse, he shows me the changes of the moon, and so I say time 's a lunary thing. That 's clear, a'n't it?

CH. Of course.

DEX. Then, Demosthenes, he wakes me up with his infernal brawlin' in the middle of the night. What is it he wakes up? [*Points to his forehead.*] It 's mind, a'n't it? Then, time 's in the mind, you see.

CH. You have a way of putting things, my lord.

DEX. More 'n all that, Champney. You can't shoot a shadow, can you? nor catch one in your hat? Can you catch time in your hat, or shoot him? Not much, I should say; ergo, time 's a shadow.

CH. Philosophy is a great matter, my lord.

DEX. And when you want it cheap, my boy, come to my lord Dexter, "The Greatest Man in the East." [*Enter servant in livery.*]

SER. My lord, the distinguished stranger, Duke de Grandam, is below.

DEX. Show him up. Ah, Champney, they can't leave the Port without seeing the great man, can they?

CH. Their curiosity is not remarkable, my lord.

DEX. I should say not. I'm a curiosity myself.

CH. Shall I retire, my lord?

DEX. Certainly not. I want you to see us meet. Take a chair. [*Champney sits. Enter Duke de Grandam.*] Happy to see you, Duke.

DUKE. I reciprocate your pleasure, my lord.

DEX. My friend, Mr. Champney, Duke. [*They shake hands.*] Take chairs, gentlemen. [*Servant places chairs.*]

DUKE. My lord, the fame of your riches and remarkable sagacity has reached the shores of La Belle France.

DEX. Ah! do they talk of me there, too?

DUKE. Not only of you, but of your interesting family.

DEX. (*to servant.*) Ask my Lady and Timoline to come in. [*Exit servant.*]

DUKE. I have heard that when our good king Louis was beheaded, you made the church-bells to toll in his memory, and I thank you for it.

DEX. I did that, all the way from Boston to Newburyport. And more! I thought the rest of the royalists would come over here, and I bought up the best meat and flour in the market, and saved all against they came. The prices rose, and burn my face, I got the benefit of the rise.

DUKE. You deserved the profit. But you have accumulated wealth in various ways, I believe.

DEX. Well, I should say I had. In the first place, Johnny Hancock, Tom Russell, and I bought up the Continental money, and when they funded I was rich at one dash. But I didn't stop there. Everything I touched turned to gold. Your nose would have gone yaller, if I'd touched it. I sent vessels everywhere; to Spain, Bombay, New Zealand. One day up comes my rigger, old Stackpole, and he says, old Stackpole says, "Great man, I must have some stay-stuff." "Very well," says I; and so, post-haste to Boston; bought up all the whalebone in every port in two hundred miles; and when the rest of mankind wanted whale, they had to come to my lord Dexter. I made a ton and a half clean silver on it.

DUKE. Excellent!

DEX. But I had a gay dream once. Three nights runnin' I dreamed of warmin'-pans, nothin' but warmin'-pans; thought they wanted 'em down to the West Indies; and burn my face! I sent fifty thousand of 'em down there, in nine different ships. They went like hot cakes. "Blessed good, indeed, missy!" all the niggers said. "Cook mighty nice, massa!" And what d'ye think I made on the

warmin'-pans down to the West Indies? Two tons and a half clean silver.

DUKE. Is it possible!

DEX. Next time I bought up twenty thousand Bibles and sent 'em down there; and sent a text, how they must all have one in every family, or gone to hell; and my captains bring me back another big pile o' money.

DUKE. Truly, my lord, you wear the cap of Fortunatus!
[*Enter Timoline and Lady Dexter.*]

DEX. Lady Dexter, Duke de Grandam! Timoline, my daughter! [*They exchange courtesies, and recognize Mr. Champney. Servant places chairs.*]

DUKE. (*aside.*) Truly a very pretty girl. [*To Lady D.*] I hope, madam, my call is not unseasonable. I was in haste to pay my respects to your family, of whom I have heard much in my own country.

LADY D. It is none too soon, my lord. You have not always lived in France, I presume, from your speaking English so well.

DUKE. No, madam; I have spent nearly half my life in Jamaica. You have been there, I think. I have either seen or dreamed of your daughter's face before.

DEX. We were all there once, a few years ago. But, by the way, Duke, you han't seen my grounds. Let's go outside.

TIM. Oh, yes, it's beautiful out.

DUKE. I should be delighted.

[*The Duke offers his arm to Timoline; Lady D. takes Mr. Champney's, and all exeunt.*]

SCENE II.

The grounds in front of Lord Dexter's mansion, where are seen, standing on arches, the statues of many distinguished persons; also, figures of lions; also an effigy of a lamb, and one of an eagle. One statue, in a military garb, bears at its base the name of Washington. On the left, stands the statue of Jefferson; on the right, that of Adams, uncovered. In the rear are figures of Indian chiefs, generals, philosophers, and statesmen; also of goddesses; and one of Lord Dexter himself, with the inscription, "The Greatest Man in the East." In the group on the centre arch, Jefferson holds in his hand an open scroll, representing the Declaration of Independence. Babson, Lord Dexter's painter, is dis-

covered lettering the scroll, on which he has advanced as far as "The Declaration." Enter Lord and Lady Dexter and daughter, Duke de Grandam, and Champney.

DUKE. Why, this is fairy-land. My lord, you have astonished the world.

DEX. I should say I had. [*Approaches Babson.*] Burn my face, Babson, that a'n't the way to spell "Constitution!"

BAB. No, my lord, it is "Declaration," — "The Declaration of Independence."

DEX. I don't want "The Declaration of Independence;" I want "Constitution."

BAB. But the scroll was intended for the Declaration, my lord, since Jefferson wrote the Declaration.

DEX. Who the devil cares what he wrote? I want "Constitution," and I'll have "Constitution." [*Babson commences to paint the word "of," and Dexter hastens in great wrath to the mansion.*]

LADY D. (*looking mortified.*) You see, my lord, that my husband has peculiar ideas.

DUKE (*laughing.*) Certainly he has a right to have the word "Constitution," if he likes it; but what's the necessity of any words at all? Everybody would know what the scroll meant. [*Enter Lord D. with a pistol, which he aims at the painter.*]

DEX. Paint that "Constitution," I tell you! [*Babson not stopping, he fires, but misses him.*]

TIM. Oh, father, what are you doing? [*Babson descends and retires behind the statues.*]

DEX. I should like to know who pays for this?

DUKE (*laughing.*) That's the question: who pays for it?

TIM. But my dear father, you might have killed Mr. Babson.

DEX. Burn his old face! No danger; he's made to be hung! He needn't be so almighty independent about his "Independence." [*Enter Lucy Lancaster, colored house-keeper, having great influence over Lord D.*]

LUCY. For shame, Lord Dexter! Put down that pistol! [*He lays it down. She takes it and exit.*]

DUKE. My lord, please explain why Mr. Adams, here, holds his hat in his hand, while your other presidents wear their chapeaus.

DEX. The devil, my Lord ; don't you see that ? Adams was unfortunate enough to git on the right hand of Washington, you see ; and how can any man stand on Washington's right hand, with his hat on ! If Jefferson had got round on that side, I should have made him take off his hat, too.

DUKE. Why, really, I never thought of that. But have you my countryman, Lafayette, here ?

DEX. I had him here the other day, but he's Bonaparte now. I've changed his name. [*Approaches the statue of Bonaparte, and, in honor of him, removes his hat, and bows profoundly.*] This is Bonaparte, my Lord. I never allow anybody to pass him without taking off his hat.

DUKE. Mon Dieu ! what am I to do, then ? I'm a Legitimist.

DEX. Then, don't let him get his eye on you !

TIM. (*to the Duke.*) Do you not admire Napoleon ?

DUKE. As a general, Mademoiselle, certainly. [*Enter Plumison Peaches, dressed in a long, black frock-coat, ornamented with stars on the collar and at the corners of the skirts, and with fringes of gold lace ; wearing shoes with large silver buckles, and a cocked hat ; and carrying a gold-headed cane, and a basket on his arm.*]

PEA. (*Sings.*) Lord Dexter is a man of fame ;
Most celebrated is his name ;
More precious far than gold that's pure,
Lord Dexter shine forevermore.

DUKE (*to Timoline.*) Why, whom have we here ?

TIM. My father's Poet-laureate.

DEX. Duke de Grandam, I have the honor to introduce to you my Poet-laureate, Plumison Peaches, Esq.

PEA. (*shaking hands with the Duke.*)

Duke de Grandam. Duke de Grandam,
Thou shalt sometime drive a tandem.

DUKE. Really, a most admirable poet ! very pat, isn't he ?

DEX. What do you think, now, Duke ?

DUKE. I am more and more surprised at everything I see.

PEA. His noble house, it shines more bright
Than Lebanon's most pleasant height;
Never was one who stepped therein,
Who wanted to come out again.

DUKE (*to Dexter.*) I take it your country does not produce many such poets; it would be too exhaustive. But what does he carry in his basket?

PEA. (*singing, and taking several loose sheets from the basket.*)
Eulogies and elegies and warnings;
Accidents and suicides and drownings;
Sometimes open and sometimes shet,
A literary cabinet.

DUKE. This is wonderful.

PEA. (*solemnly.*) Lord Dexter, I've had a dream.

DEX. Well?

PEA. Fringes, my Lord.

DEX. What fringes?

PEA. I can't wear 'em.

DEX. Don't I pay for 'em?

PEA. Yes, but it's a cussed sin to wear fringes.

DEX. Who told you that ridiculous nonsense?

PEA. Nobody told me; it was revealed.

DEX. Bosh!

PEA. But I tell you, I'm not going to wear fringes any longer.

DEX. Ah, ha! I see, — no longer! They are long enough, now.

PEA. I dreamed the devil caught me, and he held on to me by these fringes, my lord.

DEX. Bah! Did n't Solomon wear fringes? Solomon, the Magnificent? And yet, Solomon could n't sing like Plumison Peaches.

PEA. Very well; I'll keep on a wearin' 'em, unless I have another o' them dreams. [*Walks about singing.*]

His house is filled with sweet perfumes;
Rich furniture doth fill his rooms:
Inside and out it is adorned,
And on the top an eagle's formed.

[*Turns to the Duke.*] Most noble Duke, will you accept a trifling elegy I have here? [*Offers it.*]

DUKE (*taking it.*) With the greatest pleasure. What is the majestic theme?

PEA. "The Diseased Magpie."

TIM. He means "The *Deceased* Magpie."

DUKE (*laughing.*) What was the matter with it?

PEA. I think it is no matter what was the matter, so long as you know the poor magpie is dead.

DUKE. True; very true.

PEA. But I think perhaps this eulogy would suit you better. [*Hands him a sheet.*]

DUKE. And who might be the fortunate person deserving so long a eulogy as this?

PEA. It is the founder of the Shakers.

DUKE (*laughing.*) What! Eulogize in immortal verse the founder of a sect that loves neither wine, woman, nor song!

PEA. What difference does it make so long as you get the words all in?

DUKE. Ah, yes, that is true.

PEA. I haven't spread it on very thick. I drew it mild.

DEX. (*chuckling.*) He saves himself up for me. I take the cream, and the rest get the skim-milk.

PEA. Perhaps you would like a warning. Here's a warning, now. [*Hands another sheet.*]

DUKE. Who is the unfortunate person to whom you have felt obliged to administer this fearful admonition?

PEA. It is written, most noble Duke, to the Great Unconverted; and also to the miscreants who steal my lord's apples.

DUKE. Truly my lord Dexter, you have a prize in this egregious poet; the most meretricious writer I have had the fortune to be acquainted with. He should be crowned with the greenest baize.

PEA. (*Bows profoundly; then struts and sings.*)

His house is white and trimmed with green;
For many miles it may be seen:
It shines as bright as any star;
The fame of it has spread afar.

[*Exit, bowing profoundly.*]

TIM. (*to the Duke.*) The Laureate has a good voice; don't you think so?

DUKE. Excellent.

LADY D. He's a good-natured soul.

DEX. (*to the Duke.*) Does the King of France also have his Poet-laureate?

DUKE. He has a jester, or did have, poor king, while he lived.

DEX. Then he didn't have a Laureate?

DUKE. I'm not so sure about that.

DEX. Well, I don't want a jester; I can play the fool myself.

DUKE. Indeed, we all play the fool too much. Pardon me, if I speak with some flattery, but I must confess that if ever I saw a place in which to learn wisdom, it is here.

[*Curtain falls.*]

ACT II.

SCENE I.

A wild heath, covered with dry grass, bushes, thistles, and vines; one or two huts in the background. Among the bushes are three women, gathering herbs and berries in baskets.

1ST WOM. No, Lord Dexter's not a bad man; he's only a lucky fool.

2D WOM. But he drives a mighty hard bargain.

3D WOM. When he says a thing he means it, and he pays us exactly what he agrees to pay.

2D WOM. If I had his money, I'd be more generous.

3D WOM. You think so; but there a'n't one man in fifty that's quite so decent when he has money, as he would be without it — nor woman either.

1ST WOM. Well, I thank God I han't got any money, and I hope I never shall have. You know the town up there as well as I do, and you know there a'n't a soul there half as happy as we be.

3D WOM. Don't I? How they would laugh at us in

their sleeves, to hear us tell 'em that! But we know, we know.

1ST WOM. Oh, what a set of slaves they are! A moth flew into my candle the other night, and I said, or something made me say, "This poor moth is no greater fool than a money-lover!" It didn't seem to me that I said it, but just as if some spirit in the air borrowed my lips, and said it for himself.

2D WOM. Who on earth can be happier than we be, with nothing in the world to do but pick berries, and hyssop, and balm, and sweet fern in the sunshine!

3D WOM. And when the night comes, to be under the stars, and sing, and laugh, and dance, and tell new stories! But where's little Patty? [*Enter Patty, a young girl, dancing.*] Ah, here she is! Patty, darling, give us the song the poet wrote for you.

PATTY (*pausing in her dance.*) Do you mean the one Mr. Peaches wrote?

3D WOM. Oh, no! that was more a sermon than a song. You know the one I mean.

PATTY. This one, perhaps. (*Sings.*)

Oh, come where the sweet wild roses blow!
Oh, come where creeps the vine!
And all in the sunshine, to and fro,
The birds, the bees, and the butterflies go!
Oh, come! oh, come!
Under the eglantine!

Oh, come where the pleasant waters flow,
All in the sweet sunshine!
Where the green mint and the cresses grow;
And over the pebbles the foam-flakes go!
Oh, come! oh, come!
Under the eglantine!

3D WOM. That's the song, and you sung it well.

PATTY. Methinks I love that good poet.

2D WOM. Oh pshaw, Patty! I presume he's not half as good as his verses.

PATTY. I'll find that out for myself. Do you know he's over there, this very moment, under the pine-tree? Come, and bring him some berries!

ALL. Yes, Patty. [*Exeunt. Enter, opposite, Lady and*

Timoline Dexter, in riding habits, with whips in their hands.]

TIM. Where are they? That was a charming song.

LADY D. Well sung, you mean; but rather an indifferent song.

TIM. Indeed, I thought it quite equal to Mr. Peaches. I really believe Mr. Champney wrote it.

LADY D. Suppose he did, my dear?

TIM. Mamma, it is useless to deny that I love him.

LADY D. Oh, Timmy, don't say so. You must be the Duchess de Grandam. Your father and I have both set our hearts upon it.

TIM. I cannot endure that man.

LADY D. There's one thing certain.. Your father shall not force you to the match, unless you can make up your mind to love him.

TIM. That's a good mother! [*Embracing her.*] Come now, let's have our fortunes told. [*Enter Patty.*] Ah, Patty, was it you that sang so sweetly? I might have known it.

PATTY. I was singing, but I know not how well.

LADY D. Will you not sing for us?

PATTY. I will call my aunty, and if she says so, I will sing. [*Exit.*]

LADY D. It is her aunt that tells fortunes.

TIM. Now, mamma, if her aunt says I shall marry Mr. Champney, why, of course, I shall have to marry him.

LADY D. She will not say so. Indeed, if she does say so, I'll give my consent. But you must n't say a single word to her about it.

TIM. No, not a word. [*Enter Patty and the three women.*]

PATTY. She says I may sing. [*The three women courtesy to Lady D. and Timoline, who bow, and speak to the aunt of Patty.*] What shall I sing?

TIM. Sing something about love.

LADY D. Hush, child! Let her sing of nature.

TIM. And is not love that?

LADY D. (*laughing.*) It ought to be.

PATTY. I will sing of both. [*Sings.*]

“Free! free!” the little brooks cry;
And they laugh and they frolic by;
And the sparrows chirp and the robins trill
All at their own sweet will;

Then why, oh, why
May not we love, my love and I?

“Free! free!” is the song of the sea,
And the song of the wind on the lea;
And the waves dash high, and the sea-gulls play,
All in their own wild way;

Then why, oh, why
May not we love, my love and I?

TIM. (*clapping her hands.*) The very song I wished;
and you sang it divinely.

LADY D. You did sing it well, indeed.

TIM. I thank you, Patty. And now, before we are
obliged to go, will not your aunt tell our fortunes?

1ST WOM. Certainly. Put your hand in mine. [*Tim-
oline complies. The woman scans it intently.*] This line
means much; but here is the stronger line, and I see that
your better fortunes will prevail. A man of the world has
evil designs upon you. Your eyes are even now open, and
you guess whom I mean. Avoid that man. But there
lives one in humble circumstances, who truly loves you.
Him you will marry. Enough to say now that you see him
every day.

TIM. And you will not give me his name?

1ST WOM. I cannot do that. I am not permitted.

TIM. Who wrote the song which Patty just now sang?

1ST WOM. Ah! Maybe I need not tell you any more!
But come, ladies, we will spread a carpet on the grass, and
have some new milk and fresh berries. [*To Lady D.*]
Shall I also tell your fortune?

LADY D. No, I thank you. I am too old for that.
There must be little of either bad or good left for me. But
I shall be delighted with your milk and berries. Here is a
trifle [*taking money from her purse*] for the fortune you've
already told. I beg you will accept it.

1ST WOM. You may give it to the child.

LADY D. Take it, Patty; I'll assure you the song was
worth ten times as much.

PATTY (*taking the money.*) Ah me, to pay you for this I shall have to sing another song.

TIM. Truly, Patty, if you will be so good, I will send you something beautiful.

PATTY. If you only love me, that's all I ask. But that's nearly what the song says. [*Sings.*]

Come not to me with buds and flowers,
Though the loveliest of their clime!
Come not to me with the painter's praise,
Nor with the poet's rhyme!
All these have been mine before;
Ah me! I ask no more, no more,
If you will only love me!

I ask you not for rubies, nor pearls,
Nor diamonds from the mine;
Go, give to the heartless ones your gems,
Your jewels to the fine.
It is your love I implore;
Ah me! I ask no more, no more,
If you will only love me.

TIM. Yes, Patty, I will love you, not only for your sweet voice, but for your goodness.

LADY D. (*looking at her watch.*) Really, my child [*to Timoline*], I had not supposed it could be so late. We shall have to forego the fresh berries and the new milk so kindly offered us.

2D WOM. At any rate, your horses have been fed, for I told our Jack to see to them.

LADY D. You are very kind. Be sure to visit our house when you come to town, and we will return the compliment. So, then, good-by, and good luck to all of you.

TIM. (*caressing Patty.*) And you, Patty, I shall be almost angry with you if you do not come to see me very often. Good-by. Good-by. [*Exeunt.*]

3D WOM. If only all women were as good! I will go and see them safely off. [*Exit.*]

2D WOM. I doubt if Lord Dexter knows what a fine girl that is.

1ST WOM. He! All he knows is, that he's rich as Cræsus; and the devil take the hindmost. [*Enter Lord D. with a riding-whip.*]

DEX. How d' ye do, sisters? Burn my face, if I han't been ridin' like a post-hoss; and I can't find 'em anywhere. You han't seen my gals round here anywhere, have you?

1ST WOM. If you mean your wife and daughter, they've been here and gone.

DEX. Well, if they've gone, I can't catch 'em. They beat me every time. But come, sister [*to 1st woman*], you would n't let me pay you for the fortune you told me, t'other day, and now you've got to take this gold-piece. [*Holds out a ten-dollar gold-piece.*]

1ST WOM. Never, my lord.

DEX. But I say you shall.

1ST WOM. Upon my word, I don't see how you can make me do it.

DEX. But I see! [*drawing and presenting his pistol.*] It's only ten dollars. Now take it or off goes the pistol.

1ST WOM. (*taking the money.*) I did n't think you would go that far.

DEX. Did n't I tell you? Now, sister, we're even; and so, God bless you; I must back again. [*Exit.*]

SCENE II.

Lord Dexter's library, lined with books in showy binding. Enter Champney and Duke de Grandam.

DUKE. Quite a large collection, Mr. Champney!

CH. It would seem so, my lord, but [*looking furtively around and putting his finger to his lips*] to tell you the truth, they are not all books that seem to be. You remember the "painted ship" on the "painted ocean?" Well, [*pointing to the upper shelves*] this is on the same principle. Those upper rows are nothing in the world but fresco.

DUKE. The deuce you say! The most innocent person then could scarcely be injured by them?

CH. I mentioned this in order that you might not inquire too persistently respecting the books in the upper rows, you see.

DUKE. That was good in you. [*Enter Lord and Lady D. and Timoline.*]

DEX. I am glad to see that you are fond of books, my lord.

DUKE. I was sincerely admiring your collection; and especially the large volumes on the upper shelves. [*Champney, by dumb signs, tries to prevent the Duke from making further allusion to the upper shelves; but the Duke maliciously ignores him.*] I was particularly attracted by that magnificent edition of Boswell's "Johnson," on the very top shelf.

DEX. (*grandiloquently.*) That's the best edition of Boz-zell in the United States.

DUKE. Would you be good enough to have the servant take it down for me? It is truly wonderful. [*Champney looks distressed.*]

DEX. Sometime, my lord, I should be delighted: but the boy has a lame back now, and besides, I can't find any ladder. It has been carried off.

DUKE. I can reach it myself, I think, if you will allow me to put a chair on your table here. [*Champney, much annoyed, talks with the ladies.*]

DEX. Positively, my lord, I could not think of such a thing. The idea of a duke climbing up there like a monkey!

DUKE. Ladies, would you have any objection to my putting a chair on your table?

TIM. Certainly not. [*The Duke then puts a chair on the table, and by the aid of another chair steps on the table. While he is doing this Dexter walks about in apparent anxiety.*]

DEX. My lord, you hold on; let me get up!

DUKE. Oh no, indeed. [*Steps on chair and reaches for the books, but finds a smooth surface over which he rubs his hand.*] Why, how's this, my lord? There is no book here. This is paint.

DEX. (*desperately.*) Very well, you see what you get by too much curiosity. That shelf was painted there to provoke curiosity. [*The Duke looks nonplussed.*] I wanted to spare you the mortification, but you wouldn't listen to me.

DUKE (*descending.*) I confess, my lord, it was all my fault. [*Champney and the ladies appear much amused, while Dexter holds his sides to prevent laughing.*]

DEX. (*aside.*) I got out o' that, pretty well, burn my face!

DUKE (*forcing a laugh.*) My lord, it served me rightly to be sold in that manner. I suppose [*looking around*] you have read all these books?

DEX. From end to end, a dozen times.

DUKE. I could not otherwise account for the extraordinary information you possess on almost every subject.

DEX. Well, now, that is a very handsome compliment, and I flatter myself, quite well deserved.

DUKE. On the whole, my lord, which among this large assortment of books are your favorites?

DEX. The greatest book on them shelves is "The Bon Ton Magazine."

DUKE. What! greater than Shakespeare? Bacon? Cicero? Homer? — for I see you have all these.

DEX. Greater than even Bornel Thornton!

DUKE. Is it possible! I should think, then, it would rather strain one's liver to digest it. But [*turning to the ladies*] do you agree with my lord on this subject?

LADY D. I must confess that I never appreciated the "Bon Ton Magazine."

TIM. And I am sure that I like Sterne much better than any you have named.

DUKE. And what do you say, Mr. Champney?

CH. I say, every man to his taste.

DUKE. (*to Lord D.*) The fame of another book has reached me, the work of your own hands.

DEX. Very likely.

DUKE. The title of that book is well known, — "A Pickle for the Knowing Ones." Have you a copy?

DEX. (*taking down a book.*) There it is; and good enough, I flatter myself.

DUKE (*examining it.*) That was a brilliant innovation on the established rules, my lord, to leave out such ridiculous incumbrances as the marks of punctuation.

DEX. Everybody says it's a grand invention. But I had a page put in at the end, of nothin' else in the world but commys and colons and sclamation-pints; and over all I writ these now famous words: "*They may pepper and salt it as they please.*"

DUKE. Great book, my lord, great book! But what did the reviewers say?

DEX. What could they say? I had 'em all by the nose.

DUKE. That's a splendid metaphor, my lord.

DEX. I'm writin' another book, already.

DUKE. Ah! And what may the title be?

DEX. "The Devil's Darn-needle."

DUKE. That's the popular name of the dragon-fly, I believe?

DEX. I should n't wonder. But you see, I'm the Devil's Darn-needle, myself, or at least, I'm goin' to be.

DUKE. How's that?

DEX. Why, you see, I can't keep still, now, and how the devil am I ever goin' to keep still? When I die, I shall go plump into a Devil's Darn-needle. That ere's an animal as never stops, you see. He's here, there, and everywhere, all at the same time. Hurrah for the Devil's Darn-needle! [*Dances about the room. Enter Peaches with his basket as before. Dexter seizes and compels him to dance with him. The Duke, Champney, and the ladies converse, and watch the evolutions of Dexter and the Laureate. Peaches extricates himself from the grasp of Dexter, and sits down, apparently out of breath. At this point several clocks are heard to strike.*]

DEX. (*after listening a minute.*) Champney, what the devil's the matter with them clocks? Don't you hear old Demosthenes, there, bawlin' away as if he had the roarin' stomik'-ache? — and Julius Cæsar, immortal Julius, a-callin' him a liar? For God's sake, Champney, go in there and ask them, politely, if they can't keep still awhile. I should like to hear myself talk. No, Champney, we'll all go in. They'll never stop for you alone. If they see us all comin' it'll frighten 'em. I'll take the lead. [*Walks off valiantly. The rest follow, laughing.*]

ACT III.

SCENE I.

The retreat of the astrologer, Bachelder. The room is surrounded with maps of the heavens and charts representing the twelve signs of the Zodiac, etc. Bachelder sits resting his elbows on a low black table, upon which he is casting a horoscope in chalk. Around the edges of the table are seen folio books, an hour-glass, a skull, a pile of coin, a statuette of Fortune, etc.

BACH. (*throwing down the chalk.*) And so it seems these planets, millions of miles away, influence our conditions. But when I was born, it is plain enough only the rascal stars were abroad, else with my brains, I should not sit here, the poor-fed grub of innumerable asses, who first saw light with Sirius and Capella in ascendant. [*Enter Dexter.*] My lord, you are late.

DEX. It's my star's fault if I be.

BACH. Undoubtedly.

DEX. My good Bachelder, I would fain find out what villain was in my melon-patch last night.

BACH. You come to the wrong place. We trace not collicky stuff with the starry science, nor any such litter. Go to your Madam Hooper! She has a nose will smell you out a petit-larceny. Trouble me not with mince-meat matters! I have nearly completed your horoscope.

DEX. I thought you would have it done by this.

BACH. A great man's horoscope requires time.

DEX. But suppose I should die before you get it all cast.

BACH. That cannot well be. To occasion death, the hyleg must be affected by an evil aspect to the anaretical stars, and these must be afflicted of themselves; for life will be *preserved*, if at the same time the hyleg be aspected by Jupiter, or with eight or twelve degrees of Venus, which I perceive to be your case, as it now stands.

DEX. Is there any way of keepin' things in that condition?

BACH. (*laughing.*) Pardon me, my lord, that I should laugh. But reflect a moment, and you will see that to keep things in that condition *we* should have to control the stars, instead of their controlling us.

DEX. I did n't know exactly what an astrologer might do at a pinch.

BACH. I cannot stop the influence, but I can foretell it. I have already ascertained that when you were born, the sign ascending, and its lord, were in fiery triplicity. Does that satisfy you?

DEX. I suppose that ought to satisfy any reasonable man; but I don't know as I understand exactly what you mean?

BACH. Remember, then, that you are the Querent, while I am the Quesited. Can you remember that?

DEX. Certainly.

BACH. Well, then, what is it that I requested you to remember?

DEX. That I was a queer ant, — and you was a queerer one, did you say?

BACH. (*laughing.*) I was afraid you would not remember it.

DEX. Is it absolutely necessary that I remember it?

BACH. It would be better; but then, if you can't, you can't. And by the way, that is one of the great lessons of astrology. You can, at least, remember that, my lord, — to wit, that if you can't, why then you can't.

DEX. I thought I knew that before.

BACH. Undoubtedly you thought so; but to know is one thing, and to think you know is quite another.

DEX. Burn my face, that never occurred to me before.

BACH. And I suppose it never occurred to you that the malefic aspects of the planets are the semi-quartile, the semi-square, the sesqui-quadrant, and the opposition?

DEX. Never!

BACH. Nevertheless, that is true; and it will be well for you to bear that fact in mind.

DEX. If you could once git that on my mind, I could hold to it. But somehow or other, it seems sort o' misty-like; yet once there [*pointing to his forehead*] it sticks like Death to a dead mule.

BACH. That's what makes you a great man, my lord. I should no more think of broaching a proposition of that magnitude to Madam Hooper, or any of your common

minds, than I would think of eating the mule of which you speak. But see here your horoscope. [*Dexter examines with a dazed aspect the figure on the table.*] You see here the fiery Trigon, the airy Trigon, the earthy Trigon, and the watery Trigon; the twelve celestial houses.

DEX. What is this Trigon? Burn my face, but you scare me a little with this Trigon.

BACH. Which? the fiery Trigon?

DEX. All of 'em! But the fiery Trigon is the wust. It a'n't a cannibal, is it?

BACH. Not exactly; but it is very well that you have a healthy dread of either one of them.

DEX. If you have no objection, I'd a little rather you would n't mention them again. It might put somethin' into their heads, you see, to hear themselves spoke of in that way.

BACH. It would certainly be no joke if either of them did get some notion in his head.

DEX. I guess, as long as you ha'n't made the horoscope yit, the safest way for me will be to come agin, when things looks a little better. Have you got a lantern I can take along? it's pretty dark out.

BACH. Certainly. [*Brings lantern.*] So long as you have this lantern with you, the Trignons can't hurt you in the least; especially if I draw a charm here on the table, as you cross the threshold. [*Lights lantern and hands it to Dexter.*]

DEX. I am very much obleeged to you [*going*]. You draw the charm now, don't you?

BACH. Yes, my lord. [*Marks with chalk.*] All right! You can make it safely. [*Exit Dexter.*] Was ever such an incomparable dunce? But the best fish yet in my net. [*A knock is heard.*] Come in! [*Enter Duke.*] Walk in, sir. Ah, I perceive it is the Duke de Grandam.

DUKE. The same. Mr. Bachelder, I believe.

BACH. Yes, my lord. Take a chair. [*The Duke sits.*]

DUKE. I am told that you are an astrologer.

BACH. I am.

DUKE. I have come to learn my horoscope.

BACH. Can you tell me the exact minute of your birth?

DUKE. I can.

BACH. I will then do what you wish.

DUKE. I was born on the twenty-eighth day of February, 1760, at 7:47 A. M.

BACH. (*writing it.*) On the twenty-eighth February, 1760, 7:47 A. M.

DUKE. But I will observe, that I have n't that entire confidence in your science that I wish I had.

BACH. Why, then, my lord, do you give me the honor of this visit?

DUKE. Solely on the strength of the marvelous things I have heard of you.

BACH. Have you not also heard of those world-famed Doctors of the Starry Science, Palamedes, Thales, Democritus, Anaxagoras, Hippocrates, Anaximander, Virgil, Apolonius Tyaneus, Nostrodamus, Valentine Narbod, William Lilly, Guido Bonatus, Michael Scott, Antiochus Tibertus?

DUKE. Yes, I have.

BACH. Do you not remember that Julius Cæsar noted the revolutions of the stars in the midst of preparations for battle?

DUKE. Yes, but I also remember —

“Hermogenes, by Diophantus told
He should n't live a month, said, ‘Good my friend,
In telling me my destiny you are bold;
For truly, sir, your own life’s near its end.’
And then he strook him fatally; and so he fell
While he Hermogenes’ sad fate did tell.”

BACH. But how did Hermogenes turn out? The poet has forgotten to tell us that.

DUKE. Very true; I had not observed that omission.

BACH. I can tell you. According to the best accounts, the prophecy came true. Do you not also remember the case of Picus, Earl of Mirandola, who, from his antipathy to the art, was named “The Scourge of Astrology,” but to whom it was foretold by three different astrologers that he should not live above the age of thirty-three? and how he did die at precisely that age?

DUKE. I must confess that there is much force in what

you say. But tell me, now, what is likely to happen to me in the way of wedlock?

BACH. You wish to know if you shall marry a particular person? I can solicit information as regards a hypothetical case. I will suppose, for example, in my inquiry through the celestial house, that the question is if you will marry a certain young lady about the size of my lord's Timoline?

DUKE. Very well, I am satisfied.

BACH. I suppose, then, we understand each other?

DUKE. If we do, it will not be a losing affair. And now, [*rising*] as I have finished my errand, I will retire. Good-by! [*Extends his hand.*]

BACH. (*shaking the Duke's hand.*) Good evening, my lord. [*Exit Duke.*] So, then, here is another suitor to the pretty — the pretty fortune of Lord Dexter! [*Enter Peaches.*] Holloa, Peaches! are you also in search of a wife?

PEA. (*sitting.*) Mr. Bachelder, I am astonished that you should dream of such a thing. I'm in search of material. This Lord Dexter is so awful exacting. I'm all run out of similes, and I came to get hold of something new. I've compared my lord to everything wonderful on the earth, in the water, and in the air, but he's hungrier'n ever. Now, if you'll please give me the names of the lucky stars, I can keep up; but if you refuse, I'm a gone sucker.

BACH. But does my lord furnish you with a plentiful supply of wine? I will be happy to exchange a few stars for a quantity of good old sherry?

PEA. Is that so? He's never given me any wine yet, but if you'll tell him that's the custom, he will. As for the wine, you can have it all, for I'm a cold-water poet.

BACH. Mr. Peaches, don't you know it's perfectly ridiculous to think you can write poetry on cold water?

PEA. But I have written reams of it; and everybody says it's mighty good poetry.

BACH. Mr. Peaches, when everybody says that, it is time you began to doubt what everybody says. They said that once of Mr. Abraham Cowley, and a thousand others, whom nobody, nowadays, ever hears of.

PEA. Well, if you'll give me the stars to fall back on, there's no doubt but I shall make it go.

BACH. Stars and cold water, you'll find, make a devilish thin, collicky diet. But I will cram you, Peaches, so you shall dream of nothing else but stars. I will not yet put you in the milky way, but reserve that blessing until I taste the quality of my lord's Amontillado. How many stars will you take the first time?

PEA. For the present I shall be satisfied with half a dozen.

BACH. (*rapidly.*) Herschel, Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, Venus, Mercury.

PEA. Not so fast! not so fast! my dear Bachelder!

BACH. I was endeavoring to impress upon your mind the tremendous rapidity with which these noble personages traverse the heavens.

PEA. The devil could n't catch 'em? What was the first you mentioned?

BACH. Herschel.

PEA. Herschel? How on earth am I goin' to rhyme that?

BACH. With your usual accuracy, of course. You can rhyme "Herschel" with "bushel," "Churchill," "satchel," and a thousand other words.

PEA. So I can! Mr. Bachelder, you, too, might have been a poet. And now I think of it, if your name had been *Bachel* instead of *Bachelder*, I might very easily rhyme "Herschel" with "Bachel."

BACH. That's just my devilish luck, Mr. Peaches. If my name had only been Bachel, you had made me immortal.

PEA. It's too bad! It is really too bad.

BACH. (*sorrowfully.*) Ah, me! Upon my word, Peaches, this makes me melancholy.

PEA. Oh, now, don't take on about it! There is one thing I can do, — I can write an ode to you, if your name *won't* rhyme.

BACH. (*dejectedly.*) Alas, Mr. Peaches, that, too, is out of the question, at least so long as Lord Dexter lives. He would never permit you to celebrate any one but himself.

PEA. (*despairingly.*) Confound it.

BACH. That's what's the matter, Mr. Peaches. However, I am casting my lord's horoscope, and it is of course possible that I shall find he is not destined to live forever; and in that case I may have a chance yet.

PEA. Heavens! You don't think he's goin' to die soon, do you? That would sadly interfere with *my* bread and butter.

BACH. I see, Mr. Peaches, it is always Number One, first. You forget that with me it is a question of being made immortal.

PEA. I beg your pardon, Mr. Bachelder, but you must acknowledge that unless I git that article of bread and butter somehow provided for, the ode is nowhere, and your gravy is all spilt.

BACH. I'll starve myself first; for if I died, it would only be a few years less of a dull and uneventful vegetation, and to be embalmed in eternal verse, I could well afford the loss.

PEA. I should say that course would be wise in you, if it came to a pinch, and we could n't *both* live. But what was the name of the second star you mentioned?

BACH. Saturn. You can have Saturn with rings or without rings.

PEA. I don't know exactly what you mean, but my motto is to take all I can git, and so I'll take him with rings. I'll set him down "with rings." [*Writes in a notebook.*] What next?

BACH. Jupiter.

PEA. (*writing.*) Jupiter is down. And next?

BACH. Mars.

PEA. Mars? M—A—S? Is that the way you spell it?

BACH. Never mind the spelling. Dexter won't know whether it is right or not.

PEA. What was the next?

BACH. Venus.

PEA. Venus was a female. How am I goin' to compare my lord to Venus?

BACH. I give it up.

PEA. What was the other one?

BACH. Mercury.

PEA. That's worse to rhyme than Herschel.

BACH. Oh, no, it's the easiest of all. It rhymes with B, C, D, E, G, P, T, V, Z. *Mercurée*, don't you see?

PEA. *Mercurée*! Oh, yes, that's capital. But give me one more.

BACH. Sirius.

PEA. Perfectly serious.

BACH. Nonsense!

PEA. But I am serious, I tell you.

BACH. Mr. Peaches, Sirius is the name of a star.

PEA. If it is, then I am a star.

BACH. Don't you believe what I tell you?

PEA. Did n't I admit I was serious?

BACH. Mr. Peaches, I am talking about one thing, and you are talking about quite a different thing. I said there was a star *called* Sirius. Do you understand me now?

PEA. I think I do, now. But why on earth do you call one star more serious than another? I think they are all melancholy enough.

BACH. I cannot suspect you, Mr. Peaches, of willfully misunderstanding what I say, and yet I should think a very slight provision of common sense would teach you, that when I say there is one star *called* Sirius, I am not describing the condition of that star.

PEA. Ah, Mr. Bachelder, now I understand you. You mean that it is simply *called* serious, but that in fact it is *not* serious.

BACH. Good Lord, Mr. Peaches! I did contemplate taking you into the Zodiac, but I give it up.

PEA. I don't want to git into any pokerish places, if I know it.

BACH. Why, Peaches, you don't imagine I would take you where I would n't go myself?

PEA. I'd rather see it before I venture. No dark rooms for me, if you please, and none of your traps.

BACH. Then you think the Zodiac is a dark room or a trap?

PEA. How do I know it a'n't?

BACH. Just step outside a minute, and I'll show you one of the signs of the Zodiac.

PEA. I'll go on one condition.

BACH. Well, and what is that?

PEA. That you'll take a lantern with you.

BACH. (*laughing.*) Would'st look at Aquarius with a lantern? Would'st pry into the secrets of the heavenly Virgo, with a tallow-candle? O Peaches, Peaches! when you were born, Leo, certainly, was neither in ascendant, nor on the cusp of the ascendant.

PEA. (*aside.*) He must be crazy. I'll wish him good evening. Be calm, Mr. Bachelder. I am afraid this business of yours has a tendency to unsettle the mind.

BACH. Poets and astrologers are alike insane.

PEA. Good evening, Mr. Bachelder.

BACH. Good evening. Don't forget that I *sold* you the stars, and that you have promised to write an ode to me.

PEA. You may look on yourself as a made man. [*Exit.*]

BACH. Ah, me, what a world! [*Curtain falls.*]

ACT IV.

SCENE I.

The Library. Enter Dexter and Lucy Lancaster.

DEX. Lucy, it's a blasted shame if I can't make that girl marry the Duke.

LUCY. Indeed, my lord, I wouldn't marry him if he were a dozen dukes.

DEX. Burn my face, Lucy, I'd like to know how she's goin' to make out any better.

LUCY. It depends on what you want her to marry for. If title is all you want, why, she'll have that from you.

DEX. But I'm not a sure-enough lord, you know; and De Grandam's a regular duke. He's got a "De" on to his name, don't you see?

LUCY. Then you want your daughter to marry for a title, and title only.

DEX. Why not? I've got everything else; money by the cart-load.

LUCY. And for what reason do you think this duke wishes to marry your daughter?

DEX. (*hesitating and fumbling at his watch-chain.*) Why, Lucy, it must be for her money.

LUCY. Perhaps, then, he would take the money without the wife? Might he not prefer that?

DEX. Damn him, he shan't have her! He shan't have my Timmy!

LUCY. You seem to have changed your mind suddenly.

DEX. Well, now, how do you know he don't love Timmy?

LUCY. My lord, I think I know when I see a man in love.

DEX. You know lots o' things, I admit. But it a'n't possible to know for certain, whether a man's in love.

LUCY. Yes, I think even that is possible.

DEX. If you could only show for certain he's not in love, I'd give it up.

LUCY. Very well, then. I'll undertake to show it; but you'll have to die first.

DEX. Die! Pshaw! you're jokin'! How should I know anything about it if I was dead?

LUCY. Listen, my lord. You have already had made for you, in anticipation of death, and in imitation of the Great Cardinal Wolsey, as you call him, a splendid coffin.

DEX. (*somewhat alarmed.*) Well?

LUCY. To that extent you are prepared to die.

DEX. Yes, — to that extent.

LUCY. And the coffin, costing so much, should be utilized.

DEX. Br-r-r-r! you make me shiver!

LUCY. And you have had built for yourself a handsome tomb in the basement of your summer-house, the gilded arbor.

DEX. Well?

LUCY. What hinders you then from dying?

DEX. Confound it, Lucy, I don't like to hear you talk so almighty cool about this thing!

LUCY. It's a pretty cool subject, my lord.

DEX. You a'n't goin' to murder me, be you?

LUCY. No, my lord, you must die by your own will.

DEX. Good Lord, Lucy, you don't think I'd do that?

LUCY. If you refuse to die, just for a day or two, I cannot carry out my plan.

DEX. (*brightening*.) Oh, I see! It's make believe? Good Lord, Lucy, why didn't you say so before?

LUCY. I thought you would have seen that.

DEX. And so I'm to come to life again! what's the use of dyin', then, anyhow?

LUCY. You will make a will. When the contents of that will are known, we shall see if the Duke loves your daughter.

DEX. Capital joke, a'n't it? But you'll see they don't screw down the coffin-lid? I must breathe, you know.

LUCY. I'll stick by you, with a basketful of chicken and a hamper of good wine. I'll be all tears, my lord; and you know very well, no man nor woman will dare meddle with the grief of Lucy Lancaster.

DEX. By thunder, Lucy, I'll do it; and we'll see who keeps any tears for me. But I won't have any crocodile-parson snivellin' over me. Peaches is the man. He could spout a funeral sermon like a whale. Peaches knows very well that I'm a great man, and he'll say some devilish handsome things about me. I'll drive over to Square Bil-lins's right away, and git up the will.

LUCY. Better bring the Squire here, so I can be present.

DEX. All right, Lucy. By the way, Lucy, this death's a curus thing, a'n't it? Death a'n't in the world at all, for when a man's dead, he's out o' the world. Then agin, Death a'n't a scare-crow, for scare-crows would n't scare if the crows did n't think the scare-crows was alive; ergo, the crows need n't be afraid of death. And then agin, lightnin' is alive, a'n't it? Then there can't be any death in lightnin'; ergo, lightnin' is not death. Git that ere through your wool, my girl, if you can. [*Exit.*]

LUCY. I love Timoline too well to see her sacrificed. She shall marry some better man than De Grandam, or I'm not Lucy Lancaster. [*Enter Bachelder.*]

BACH. Ah! the House of Lancaster!

LUCY. Still crazy, I see, Mr. Bachelder.

BACH. Ah, Lucy, the nature of Saturn is far more evil than that of Herschel; and I was born under Saturn, — Saturn, Lucy, "the Greater Infortune," and the innocent cause of most human suffering.

LUCY. Luckily, I don't know within a year of the time I was born; and so you can't calculate anything for me.

BACH. And you don't believe I can for anybody else. Now, if I tell you that a certain great man will die during the next eclipse of the moon, and he does die, perhaps you'll believe?

LUCY. I should be inclined to.

BACH. Well, I tell you that.

LUCY. And his name is —

BACH. It begins with D. That's all I shall tell you.

LUCY. Very well; that's enough. [*Enter Peaches.*]

BACH. Good morning, Mr. Peaches.

PEA. Good morning. Since you saw me last, I have writ four elegies, five eulogies, and six warnings.

BACH. On my honor, the most prolific of writers! will you read us one?

PEA. I think you would like this eulogy, writ expressly in derogation of "Hot Mince Pies."

BACH. In derogation? Do you not then *praise* "Hot Mince Pies."

PEA. Certainly, that's what I mean. But the title don't indicate the subject. The title is "Love in a Cottage." It's always best to keep the subject in the dark.

BACH. Really, Mr. Peaches, I'm at a loss to see the connection between "Love in a Cottage" and "Hot Mince Pies."

PEA. Good Heaven, sir, don't people who live in cottages, love "Hot Mince Pies" just as well as other people?

BACH. (*laughing.*) Certainly. You celebrate the loves of cottagers for "Hot Mince Pies?"

PEA. That's just what I do.

BACH. What else have you?

PEA. I've a handsome warning for a certain great man against the next great eclipse of the moon.

BACH. Mr. Peaches, you stole that subject.

PEA. Do you remember the bargain we made?

BACH. Perfectly. So many stars for so much — you know what.

PEA. And after I come away, I thought it was mighty mean of you not to throw in the 'clipses; so, as you didn't, I helped myself.

BACH. (*laughing.*) Well, if you're not afraid of the consequences, go ahead. But [*solemnly*] I tell you the Caput Argol Medusæ is not to be trifled with.

PEA. (*alarmed.*) Why, really, Mr. Bachelder, I hope I did no great harm. I would n't say hard things of a flea. But if you object I'll burn it, Mr. Bachelder, [*much affected*] I'll burn it.

BACH. That would be cruel, Mr. Peaches, to burn an in-offensive flea.

PEA. Oh, no, no; I mean I will burn the warning.

BACH. I could not consent, Mr. Peaches, to so great a sacrifice.

PEA. (*affected.*) Thank you! thank you! I confess it would nearly break my heart to do it.

LUCY. Mr. Bachelder, perhaps we'd better drop this subject. Because you were born so horribly unhappy, it's no reason for making everybody else miserable. Mr. Peaches, I will thank you to see if my lord Dexter has returned.

PEA. Certainly, Miss Lucy. [*Exit, bowing.*]

BACH. (*taking his hat.*) Farewell, O House of Lancaster, farewell. [*Exit.*]

LUCY. So then, at the next eclipse of the moon, a great man dies; and his name begins with D. A very fortunate prediction. It will help our little plan. [*Enter Dexter and Esquire Billings.*]

DEX. I've got him, Lucy.

ESQ. B. (*ahem.*) Very important business, Lucy. Every man should make his will before he dies.

LUCY. I suppose because he cannot afterward.

ESQ. B. (*ahem.*) On the whole [*solemnly*] I should say that observation is germane. [*Sits.*]

DEX. Here's foolscap for you, Square. [*Goes to the table.*]

ESQ. B. (*ahem.*) The will of a great man should be on parchment.

DEX. What's parchment?

ESQ. B. (*ahem.*) Parchment, my lord, is familiarly known as sheepskin; fur off.

DEX. No, not very fur off; here's a grist of it.

ESQ. B. (*ahem.*) *With — the — fur — off: wool off.*

DEX. Oh, yes, of course, I see what you mean. The fur's all off.

ESQ. B. (*ahem.*) I believe, my lord, [*rising*] I already understand the main provisions of your will. [*Takes a chair at the table.*] As I before told you, my lady will be entitled to her dower. The balance of your property you bequeath and devise in bulk, to the erection of "The Great Dexter Memorial." You mean, of course, to include your choses in action?

DEX. What's them?

ESQ. B. (*ahem.*) Unsettled matters. Balances with all parties whomsoever and whatsoever.

DEX. Every devilish one of 'em.

ESQ. B. (*ahem.*) And all hereditaments, corporeal and incorporeal.

DEX. Thunder, Square Billins, I don't know what you're talking about! I can't will away my wife and daughters, can I?

ESQ. B. (*ahem.*) No, my lord, your wife and daughter are not hereditaments.

DEX. Well, what in the devil be they, then?

ESQ. B. (*ahem.*) Children of hope, and heirs of a blessed immortality.

LUCY. Perhaps Mr. Billings had better draw up the will without our interference. He says your wife must have so much. Very well! You intend to give nearly all the rest

of your property to "The Dexter Memorial?" That's plain, is n't it?

DEX. Exactly what I want. So, Square, you may call it what you please, that's what I want.

ESQ. B. (*ahem.*) Very well, my lord. I will take the parchment to my office, and to-morrow you can bring your witnesses. [*Gathers up his papers. Exeunt Dexter and Billings. Enter opposite the Duke and Lady D.*]

DUKE. I should say, my lady, that yon gentleman who has just disappeared, is an attorney; and to my mind he walks like one who thinks he has done something of importance; made somebody's will, perhaps.

LADY D. It is not unlikely [*observing Lucy*]. Ah, Lucy, what weighty matter brings Mr. Billings here to-day?

LUCY. Something, I believe, as concerns the law. Has not my lord some debts to collect?

LADY D. That's the very thing. I have heard my lord complaining of one Podgers, who owes him a small fortune.

LUCY. Then let Podgers beware! [*Enter Timoline and Patty, now neatly dressed in calico.*]

TIM. My lord, let me present to you my friend, Miss Patty Gormon. [*Patty courtesies.*]

DUKE. I am glad to see one of whom I have heard so much.

PATTY. Thank you, sir.

TIM. Miss Patty will stay with us a week or two.

PATTY. Oh no! so long would make my aunty very sad.

TIM. Now, Patty, you sit here. [*Patty sits by the side of Lucy, and they converse. Exit Timoline.*]

DUKE. My lady, who is this Podgers of whom you spoke?

LADY D. Really, Duke, I can't see why you should care to know.

DUKE. Only for this, that I could n't bear to have him swindle anybody.

LADY. D. And how would your knowing him prevent that?

DUKE. Oh, perhaps I could get the money out of him.

LADY D. That would, indeed, be very disinterested in you. [*Enter Dexter.*]

DUKE. My lord, what sort of a man is Podgers?

DEX. He's a cussed scoundrel.

DUKE. But will he fight?

DEX. Fight? He would n't fight a rooster.

DUKE. (*resolutely.*) I am going to kill Podgers. [*Enter Bachelder.*] Ah! Mr. Bachelder! Mr. Bachelder, I am about to engage in a duel.

BACH. As I expected. At your nativity Mars was in the Tenth House, and what you say does not in the least surprise me.

DUKE. I am only afraid Podgers won't fight.

BACH. Don't be alarmed about that. Podgers knows from me that he will live to a good old age, and die at last, naturally, in his bed; therefore he fears neither man nor the devil.

DUKE. Ah! I will talk this little matter over with you at some other time. [*Enter Champney and Timoline.*]

LADY D. Timoline, I am dying to hear a song.

TIM. I think P'atty will oblige us. [*Approaches Patty.*]

LADY D. (*to Champney.*) Do you, then, write all these charming songs for Patty?

CH. I only wish they were charming, but I think whatever charm there is, comes only from the singer's voice. [*Patty advances. Those not before sitting now take seats.*]

PATTY. I will sing a little song of childhood. [*Sings.*]

The wind strays over the lea,
The brook runs away to the sea,
And the child lives on to the man:
Where, now, is the wind that strayed?
And where is the brook that ran?
And where, oh, where
Is the beautiful boy that played
With the sunshine in his hair?

The wind has been lost on the lea,
And the brook has been lost in the sea,

And the child has been lost in the man,
 But each will come back one day,
 And all by some wonderful plan;
 But when will it be?
 When will the boy come back to his play?
 Ah, when will he come to me?

[*The company applaud.*]

LADY D. Ah, Patty, that was a very sad song. Can you not sing something to raise our spirits again?

PATTY. (*looking toward Timoline for approval.*) I will try. [*Sings.*]

I love her not for her beauty,
 I love her not for her grace;
 There's many a form as winning,
 There's many as bright a face;
 But I love her for her goodness,
 For charms that no eye can see;
 I love her, I love her
 For what she has been to me.

She has been to me an angel,
 A benison and a prayer,
 A mellow light in the darkness,
 A hand on the altar-stair;
 She has guided me through my sorrows
 With a patience no eye can see;
 And I love her, I love her
 For what she has been to me.

[*Curtain falls.*]

ACT V.

SCENE I.

The grounds of Lord Dexter. On one side is seen the summer-house, containing the burial-vault. Lady D., the Duke, and Timoline discovered: the latter weeping.

TIM. Oh me, I wish there never could be any more eclipses.

LADY D. My dear child, I do not think you have ceased weeping since yesterday. It was not the eclipse that took away your good father; it only happened that his death came at the same time.

DUKE. It seems to me rather as if the very heavens were in mourning for so great and so good a man.

TIM. Oh, he was very good to me; always so kind, so indulgent.

LADY D. I am glad, my child, you have so much reason to remember your father with true filial affection. [*Enter Bachelder.*]

DUKE. It is a sad day, Mr. Bachelder.

BACH. Ah, sir, we shall never see one more mournful. It was very sudden.

DUKE. Is it true that you had predicted the decease of my lord on the day of the moon's eclipse?

BACH. I hope, Duke, I did not so far forget myself as to do that. I did, indeed, prognosticate from the Eighth House that during the eclipse last night a great man would die; but I named no one.

DUKE. Nevertheless, I suppose you knew it was my lord?

BACH. It certainly has that appearance. Ah, Duke, I am sometimes so much oppressed with this foreknowledge of events, I am forced to bed — made sick with previsionary gloom. I came down hoping I might be allowed to view the remains, but they tell me, Lucy forbids them to be seen.

LADY D. Everything has been left to Lucy. She declares no one shall see the remains until the services are read; and perhaps it may be better to pursue that course. She herself stays by my lord with the same exclusive devotion she maintained during his life.

BACH. She is a remarkable woman.

DUKE. I have heard that some suppose her to be the daughter of a king in Dahomey.

BACH. There is very little doubt of it, my lord. [*Enter Champney.*]

LADY D. Sit here, Mr. Champney. [*He sits by Timoline.*] Mr. Champney, I shall be very glad if you can favor us with some appropriate hymn to be sung at the obsequies.

CH. I will endeavor to make some suitable selection. [*Enter Lucy.*]

LADY D. Is there anything that I can do, Lucy?

LUCY. (*sadly.*) Nothing; no, nothing. I scarcely know why I have wandered here. Ah, yes, [*pressing her forehead*] there is something you can do. It is in my lord's will that it shall be read to his family on the day after his decease; and Mr. Billings, who has the will, may be out of town, at court.

DUKE. I should think that a matter of some importance, being the absolute and written request of my lord. [*Enter Billings, with green bag, and Peaches, profusely covered with crape.*] Ah, that is very fortunate. Mr. Billings is already here.

ESQ. B. (*ahem.*) My lady, I bring with me the last will and testament of your late lamented consort, which was left by him in my sacred keeping. Therein I am directed to unfold the contents thereof on the day succeeding the demise of the testator. [*Takes the parchment from the bag.*] I will now proceed to the reading of "The Last Will and Testament of Lord Timothy Dexter, known as 'The Greatest Man in the East.'" [*Reads.*] "I, Timothy Dexter, being in good health and of sound mind and memory, blessed be God therefor, do hereby make and ordain the following, as my Last Will and Testament.

"Imprimis: I bequeath and devise to my beloved wife, Hepsibeth, a life-estate in one equal one third part of all my property, real and personal, wherever situate.

Item: I do hereby give, bequeath, and devise the remainder in said equal one third part of all my property, in trust, to be expended by my executor on the decease of my said wife, for the erection of "The Great Dexter Memorial," in the town of Newburyport, which memorial I hereby direct shall be a pyramid of solid marble.

Item: I give to my beloved daughter, Timoline, an annuity of seven hundred dollars for life.

Item: All the residue of my estate, wherever and whatsoever, I hereby bequeath and devise, in trust as above mentioned, to the erection of said great pyramid or memorial.

Item: I appoint my valued friend and poet-laureate, Plumison Peaches, Esq., to deliver my funeral oration.

Item : I appoint my valued friend, Jeffrey Billings, Esq., sole executor of this my will, and direct that the contents shall be read by him to my household, on the day succeeding my demise.

In testimony whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and seal this ninth day — ”

DUKE. Sir ! will you be good enough to read the will again ? It may have escaped me, but as I understood the will, my lord has left his family almost penniless, with the exception of a barren life-estate in one third, given to his widow. [*Dexter is seen peeping from behind a half-open blind in the summer-house.*]

ESQ. B. (*ahem.*) It is too true.

DUKE. (*angrily pacing to and fro.*) Sir, it is a damned swindle ! I'll break the will.

ESQ. B. (*ahem.*) I think, my lord, I am sufficiently acquainted with the law, and with the mental condition of testator, to inform you, as it were, juridically, that the will is as firm as the Pow-wow hill yonder.

CH. If you will allow me to explain, I may say that I happened to be one of the witnesses ; that I read the will, and suggested, then and there, a larger provision for the family. But my lord remarked, and I thought quite wisely, that money, as he well knew, was no blessing, and that without money his daughter would probably marry much better than with.

DUKE. I will see what can be done ! [*Exit in great rage.*]

TIM. It was exactly right ; and much more indeed, than I either need or deserve.

CH. (*to Lady D. and Timoline.*) I think, ladies, it is time you had some rest ; and I would suggest that while these mournful preparations are being made, you will seek what you most need.

LADY D. and TIM. (*rising.*) Thank you, Mr. Champney. [*Exeunt Lady D. and Timoline.*]

PEA. Good Lord, Mr. Billins, you don't think I can git up a funeral oration in five minutes, do you ?

ESQ. B. (*ahem.*) You will have ample time, sir.

PEA. But, sir, it would take all of two days simply to catalogue the property.

ESQ. B. (*ahem.*) I am not aware, Mr. Peaches, that you are the executor of the will. You will attend strictly to your legitimate business. It is the executor's privilege to inventory the estate; it is yours to inventory the decedent's virtues.

BACH. (*laughing.*) As thus, Mr. Peaches:—

Ten acts of common kindness, worth	25 cents each.
Eighteen acts of generosity, worth	28 cents each.
Two deeds of heroism, worth	29 cents each.
One self-sacrifice, somewhat equivocal, hence depreciated in value, worth	14 cents.

Columnar virtues, Mr. Peaches!

ESQ. B. (*ahem.*) Allow me to suggest, Mr. Bachelder, that this is hardly the time or place for unseemly levity.

BACH. I beg your pardon; I meant no harm. [*Aside to Peaches.*] Be good enough to tell me, friend Peaches, to what extent you are interested in the will of my lord.

PEA. (*sighing.*) Alas, Mr. Bachelder, only in honor. That's about all we poor devils get; but [*straightening up*] it's a great honor, Mr. Bachelder.

CH. Mr. Peaches, I trust you will have ample time to complete your oration.

PEA. I tell you what, Champney, it's a pretty tight squeeze. Don't you think you could keep him over a day or two? [*Champney walks away, speaks to Billings, and exit.*]

BACH. Keep him over! why, he smells already.

PEA. Good Lord, how he smells! [*Puts his handkerchief to his nose*] and did n't leave a single cent, did he, for infectuaries?

BACH. Disinfectants, do you mean?

PEA. I don't care what you call it; but how am I goin' to deliver an hour's oration with a smelling-bottle under my nose? and how can I without one? You see I'm in a pretty quandary.

BACH. I think I can tie on a small bottle of ammonia for you, fastening the strings in some way behind your ears; or fill a small tub with cologne-water, and stand you up in that.

PEA. The idea of deliverin' an oration, standin' in a wash-tub!

BACH. Of course, if you put it that way, Mr. Peaches, you make it seem ridiculous. But you forget there's poetry enough in the cologne to completely vaporize the idea of the wash-tub. In other words, the disagreeable sense of the tub evaporates in the agreeable sense of the cologne. [*Dexter is seen at the summer-house window, laughing.*]

PEA. But who pays the cologne bill? There's nothin' in the will for it.

DEX. (*lugubriously.*) I pay the cologne-bill. [*All start and look toward the summer-house.*]

PEA. Oh, Lord, he's goin' to be a ghost! Oh, Lord! [*Half kneeling.*]

BACH. Upon my word, that was very singular.

ESQ. B. (*ahem.*) It is possible, my friends [*patronizingly*], you have never heard of such a thing as a hallucination? Allow me to inform you that the sound you heard, was a hallucination. Dead men don't speak.

PEA. Does Lucinations talk English?

ESQ. B. (*ahem.*) When a man is under a hallucination, he may hear one language as well as another.

PEA. Well, then, let the Lucination talk Dutch, confound him.

DEX. (*lugubriously.*) Chee-Lee-Nu-Ru-Oh-Wah-Kah. [*Peaches sits on the ground and Bachelder in a chair. All look much astonished.*]

PEA. Oh, Lord! Oh, Lord!

BACH. Mr. Billings, if you think that's a hallucination, perhaps you'd better step in there and introduce yourself.

ESQ. B. (*ahem.*) Why, Mr. Bachelder, a man would n't see anything there but the corpse, if he went.

PEA. Can't you see a Lucination?

ESQ. B. (*ahem.*) No, Mr. Peaches; therefore be calm.

PEA. I be calm. It's the Lucination as don't keep calm.

ESQ. B. (*ahem.*) Why, Mr. Peaches, it's no more than an ignis fatuus.

PEA. Oh, Lord, I've heard enough o' them ignis fatuuses.

BACH. I say, Mr. Billings, if you a'n't afraid, go in there.

ESQ. B. (*ahem.*) Mr. Bachelder, since you seem to think there's something supernatural about it, allow me to suggest that if the art you profess amounts to anything, you can illustrate that fact by stepping in there, yourself, and *laying* the ghost. But perhaps you are afraid?

BACH. Come on then. I'll show you I'm not afraid. Come on, Peaches. [*Pulls Peaches up and pushes him toward the summer-house, he endeavoring to get away.*]

PEA. Oh, Lord! no, no, I say! You go first! You said you wan't afraid. [*Extricates himself. As he turns round he meets Dexter, who has entered opposite, screams and faints. Bachelder sinks to the floor in amazement. Dexter bursts into a roar of laughter. Billings looks sober for a time, and then suddenly begins to laugh as heartily as Dexter. Lucy runs for water, which she pours on the head of Peaches, and he revives.*]

DEX. Chee-Lee-Nu-Ru-Oh-Wah-Kah. I pay the cologne bill.

PEA. (*gasping.*) Oh, Lord! Oh, Lord! [*Dexter pulls Peaches up and dances across the grounds with him.*]

LUCY. I must go and break the good news to my lady. [*Exit.*]

DEX. Do I smell as bad as I did, Peaches?

PEA. You must remember, my lord, that we poets have a very lively imagination. Good Lord, sir, I laid out a dollar or two on this crape, and all for no good!

DEX. I'm really sorry, Peaches. I'spose I ought to die, now, sure enough, so you need n't waste your money. But I'll buy it in, Peaches, and save it up against *your* funeral.

ESQ. B. (*ahem.*) My lord, I congratulate you on being once more with us; but it knocks a pretty considerable hole in my fees, you see, as the sole executor of your will. [*Enter Champney, Lady D., Timoline, and Lucy. Lady D. and Timoline rush to my lord, and embrace him with many tears. He is also much affected.*]

DEX. The devil said he would n't have me down there unless I came back and changed my will: so you see I've come. There, now, [*leading them to a seat*] it's all right,

you see. No more tears ! I shall think you are crying because I came back. Well, Bachelder, the great man did n't die after all. Champney, [*seizing him by the hand*] burn my face, Champney, but the girl's yours. [*Leads him to the side of Timoline.*] Bachelder, this astrology's a big thing, a'n't it ?

BACH. I'm glad to see you back, my lord. But you'll remember, I mentioned no names. I rather think you'll hear by the next ship from Europe of some other great man who died last night.

DEX. No, Bachelder, the man who died was the man in the moon. I'll give you the space between here and there to find out when his funeral comes off. I know a thing or two about space, Bachelder. You think it's all the same, don't you ? But I say it's full o' holes as a beggar's coat. The moon bores a hole in it, don't it ? Well, you say, that ere hole fills up agin. Then I ask whether or no you can't fill up the holes in a pepper-box ? You think there's no end to space, don't you ? But I say it ends where the holes begin. Ergo, space has about a million ends to it, don't you see ? But Peaches, here, he's been defrauded. Go, Bachelder, and cut some laurel in the garden. Peaches is a laureate without a crown.

BACH. Shall I dip it in cologne, my lord ?

DEX. Yes, dip it in cologne. [*Exit Bachelder. Enter opposite the Duke.*] Holloa, Duke !

DUKE. The deuce, my lord, you back ?

DEX. Yes, Duke, and with bad news for you. The devil took me one side and whispered : " When you see one Duke de Grandam, tell him [*in a loud whisper*] I want him." [*Enter Bachelder.*]

BACH. My lord, there's nothing there but these carrot-tops. Will they do ?

DEX. Yes, for an astrologer, but not for a poet. And now, my friends, [*turning to the audience*] thanking you, as the editors say, for your interest in the fortunes of so humble an individual as we are, we beg leave to retire, in order that after so long a travailing in the world below, we may obtain a portion of such poor repose as this upper world affords.
[*Curtain falls.*]

LIBRARY OF CONGRE



0 012 071 228 7